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## **New Year, New Credit Score**

With the new year comes a time for reflection and new resolutions. Start 2023 off by evaluating your credit score. A strong credit score can affect your loan rate on everything from a new car, personal loan, home loan, or even renting an apartment! If your score could use a little improvement, here are a few tips to help.

#### **Check Your Official Credit Report**

Start your evaluation by taking a closer look at your credit report. Through AnnualCreditReport.com, each of the three major bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) provide one free credit report every 12 months. Your report will contain all the credit activity reported to each bureau within the last ten years. If you don't recognize a listing or spot a blatant error, you can contact the credit reporting agency to dispute the mistake.

#### **Keep Credit Use Low**

Lenders want to know that you're financially responsible. Your credit utilization reflects this in your debt-to-income ratio. The goal is to keep your use/spend at 30% or less of your available credit line (the lower, the better). If you've maxed out credit cards, you need to consider focusing on paying down your debt to improve your score. Depending on your personal situation, you can request a credit line increase on credit cards to help increase the available credit, lowering your total credit utilization. Keep in mind, the request to increase your credit limit will result in a credit

pull, which can temporarily lower your credit score

#### **Decrease Debt**

Paying down your debt should be your number one priority on your credit improvement list. The snowball method focuses on prioritizing smaller debts and 'snowballing' to your bigger debts. The avalanche method focuses on taking on your high-interest debts first. Either method will help you achieve the goal of paying down your debt, and your score will begin to improve over time.

#### Make Payments on Time

One of the most influential factors on your credit score is whether you make your payments on time. This includes credit card bills, loans (home, personal, auto), medical bills, and more. Consider using SECU's Auto Pay feature to set it and forget it. You can also look at your payment due dates and adjust them in a way that's easy to remember (ie: the first of the month). It's best to fully pay off your card every month rather than the minimum payment. Even one missed payment can lower your score.

Need a little extra help paying off your cards and loans? Check out "Is a Debt Consolidation Loan Right for You?" in this edition of the Shareholder. SECU is here to help! Websites like https://www. myfico.com/credit-education provide more resources on understanding your credit score.

## **Social Media Quizzes** Put You at Risk for **Identity Theft**

Social media quizzes seem fun! They're innocent, trendy, and show up on social media channels like Facebook. Our advice? Don't take them! These guizzes could be giving away more information than you realize.

The guizzes ask seemingly silly or useless questions like your dream vacation spot or favorite type of chips, but fraudsters can use the information to gain access to your social accounts, personal information, or bank accounts.

#### Look familiar ...?

- What is your dream car?
- What is your birth month?
- What is your favorite type of candy?
- What is your father's middle name?
- What is the name of your first pet?

These types of questions can pop up in social media guizzes and are also used as added security for online accounts, such as your online banking accounts 0809. You'd never share your passwords, so why share your security answers?

Schlumberger Employees Credit Union strongly urges members and potential members to avoid social media quizzes. Our team uses multiple forms of identity verification when assisting members remotely, and SECU will never ask

for Personally Identifiable Information via non-secure email or Microsoft Teams. Keep your passwords and security answers private. Be cautious of social media quizzes!



## **From the President:**

Your credit union remains strong through November 2022 YTD with \$915 million in assets, and 28,000 members. Our capital has grown to \$180 million, yielding a net worth ratio of 19.7%, which is a more than adequate safety margin as per NCUA (National Credit Union Administration – the Federal regulatory agency that insures credit unions) requirements.

SECU continues to remain 5-Stars rated for the 75th consecutive quarter through September 2022. The 5-Stars rating is the highest rating offered by Bauer Financial, Inc., indicating that SECU is one of the safest financial institutions in the U.S. You can rest assured we have your best interest in mind.

#### **Financial Fitness**

A lot of people associate the start of a new year with resolutions for improvement. Many focus on physical fitness goals to better their health and appearance. We think it's just as important to look at your financial fitness to start off the new year with these five tips.

#### 1. Build Your Budget

Whether you have a current budget in place or not, the new year is a great time to re-evaluate your monthly finances. Calculate your monthly payments, such as home loan, auto loan, and credit card spend. See where you can improve your spending habits and build a better understanding of your monthly needs. Websites like nerdwallet.com have great resources and references to create a personal or family budget and stick to it.

#### 2. Review Your Credit Report

You can request one free credit report annually from AnnualCreditReport.com from each of the three major bureaus. Each new year, take a moment to request your reports and review for any inaccuracies and to check that no one is using your credit unlawfully. If you do spot an error, or what appears to be fraudulent activity, report it to the bureau right away.

#### 3. Create An Emergency Fund

More than half of Americans don't have an emergency fund or liquid cash (**cnbc.com**). It's important to start now. Consider the minimum you could put aside per paycheck to build up to three to eight months of income, depending on your monthly budget and needs 0715. Save more per month if you are able. Calculate your monthly expenses to make sure you have enough saved should an emergency happen. We can help make it easy with automatic payroll deduction.

#### 4. Automate Your Money

Set up direct deposit with your employer to put your paychecks into your SECU accounts. If you're a current Schlumberger

employee, you can have your checks split and go into two financial institutions. Not with Schlumberger? Contact your employer's HR or Payroll Department to help you set up your direct deposit. Once you have your paychecks going into your SECU accounts, you can automate routine savings, set up monthly bill pay, automate loan payments, and more.

#### 5. Revisit Your Retirement Funds

If your company offers a 401(k) plan, consider contributing enough to meet the maximum company match. Making regular contributions to a retirements savings like a 401(k) or IRA account can help you better plan for your retirement. SECU offers Traditional and Roth IRAs to help members save for retirement. There are no initial or monthly fees charged for IRA investments with SECU.

#### Home and Auto Buyer's Workshops

We are excited to offer our monthly Home Buyer's Workshops and bi-monthly Auto Buyer's Workshops again for 2023. Members and potential members are welcome to join us online via live-streamed webinar to learn the ins-and-outs of the home and auto buying processes. We will continue to host them fully remote, having seen in increase in attendance and participation during our fully remote sessions the last two years.

Members who attended these workshops in the past found them incredibly helpful in their buying processes. Don't just take our word for it! Here's what some of our 2022 attendees had to say:

## "Thanks for great session. Really appreciate all those fundamental concepts and explanations." -Serdar A., Home Buyer's Workshop

"Thanks for organizing this kind of workshop. They are extremely useful for people with no experience in the home buying process. Good job SECU/SWBC." -Pedro A., Home Buyer's Workshop

"Very informative workshop, well presented with plenty of time for questions." -Maxime B., Auto Buyer's Workshop

## "Great job to keep the content simple yet thorough focused on the key topics for auto purchasing." -Aaron B., Auto Buyer's Workshop $% \mathcal{A}$

Interested in signing up? View our list of upcoming dates, times, and registration links on our website. We will be posting the

upcoming dates at the end of Q1. Scroll over the "Education" tab and click on "Auto Buyer's Information" or "Home Buyer's Information" to register in advance.

On behalf of SECU board of directors and staff, we thank you for your continued support.

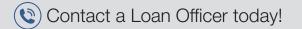


*Harold Ottis* President



## **ESC** Featured Loan Rates

- Auto Loan (ALA\*) Boat Loan (ALA\*) Motorcycle Loan (ALA\*) Consolidate (ALA\*) VISA Card (ALA\*)
- 3.74% APR\* 3.74% APR\* 3.74% APR\* 5.49% APR\* 9.90% APR\*



\*APR is Annual Percentage Rate. Rates depend on terms and conditions. Contact a Loan Officer today! \*ALA is As Low As \*Rates are accurate as of this edition's Shareholder publication and are subject to change.



## SECU Sets 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

The 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Members is set for Monday, February 20, 2023 at 9am CST. SECU will conduct our meeting via webinar, which will allow more members to participate. In February 2022, we had 145 registrants in attendance from 26 countries.

Your president and board will make an informative presentation covering the financial soundness, growth, and strategic direction of our credit union. Questions submitted from the registrants will be addressed following the event.

There will be \$1,000 in e-door prize giveaways for members who attend the online event. To participate online, you'll need internet access and an up-to-date web browser. Audio will be made available through a provided telephone number and PIN, provided during online registration 1012. **Members MUST pre-register for the event**. Details can be found on our website's News and Events section, **www.secu.slb.com**.

As a Member and Shareholder, the Annual meeting of Members allows you the opportunity to elect your Board of Directors and to express opinions regarding SECU policies and programs, Credit Unions are the only financial institutions owned entirely by their members. SECU is a MEMBER OWNED, MEMBER LED<sup>SM</sup> financial institution solely sponsored by Schlumberger for a specific mission.

Mission Statement: The Schlumberger Employees Credit Union is a not-for-profit, full service financial institution dedicated to assisting members in meeting their financial needs.

We hope you'll plan to join us online for our Annual Meeting.

## Find a Branch Anywhere in the US!

Did you know SECU is partnered with the CO-OP Shared Branch, providing our members with access to nearly 6,000 credit unions across the United States? These 5,500+ credit union branches span all 50 states and give SECU members face-to-face access to their accounts and funds.

SECU members can access any CO-OP Shared Branch during the branch's specific hours of operation, including evening and weekend hours (depending on the branch, check hours prior to your visit). Some branches even offer drive-through services 0904! At a shared branch, members can access basic banking services like depositing or withdrawing cash, depositing checks, making payments on loans, and more. Any loan, credit card, or debit card will need to be requested through Net24 or with SECU at the Sugar Land branch.

Remember to take your government ID when you visit a CO-OP Shared Branch. The teller will match the ID you have on file with SECU to what you present at the shared branch. If you think your ID might be expired, send us an email at secu@slb.com and we can help you update your ID and information.

To find a participating CO-OP Shared Branch near you, use the zip-code locator at the bottom, right side of our website, find the search feature within your Net24 Mobile App, or scan the QR code.



## Is a Debt Consolidation Loan Right for You?

You've decided to start 2023 off with a strong resolution: to get your finances in order. Sometimes, a little help can be needed as you navigate through your monthly finances to create or re-evaluate your budget. SECU offers members debt consolidation loans, also known as Signature Loans. The idea is to consolidate multiple card or loan payments into ONE payment.

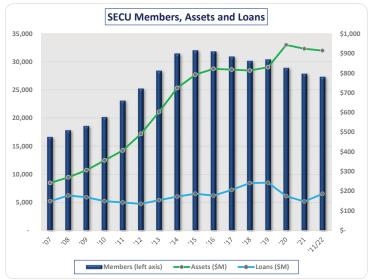
It seems counterproductive to secure a new loan to pay off loans or credit card balances, but a SECU Signature Loan can help you make your payments on time, rather than having multiple monthly payments and risk missing one. It can also help you secure a lower interest rate. If any of your current lines of credit are variable, consolidating them into one SECU Signature Loan locks in a fixed interest rate, meaning your payment will remain the same every month. And there's no pre-payment penalty fee, so if you find the funds to pay off your debt early, we won't charge you for it.

Contact a Loan Officer today to see if a Debt Consolidation Loan is right for you at **secu@slb.com**. We can even help you get started on your loan application today (members must qualify).





## **SECU Member Asset Chart**

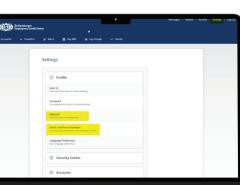


## It's a New Year! Make Sure Your Info is Up-to-Date

As you begin to sort out your 2023 resolutions and reflections, take some time to reflect on your SECU accounts. When is the last time you made sure you phone number, email address, and mailing address were up to date? Making changes to your accounts is easy and helps you access them quickly.

To verify and update your information, log into your Net24 Online Banking account. Look in the top, right corner for the 'settings' button and then drop down on 'Profile.' From there, check your Address and Email and Phone Number. If they're incorrect, you can make your changes right in the portal and save them! We suggest using

a personal email address if you're currently using your Schlumberger email.



## **IT PAYS** to Read the Shareholder!



We are always looking for volunteers who are interested in serving their Credit Union through committees (monthly meetings). If interested, please contact our President, Directors, or email **secu@slb.com**.



Chairman – Joe Van Valkenburgh

Vice Chairman – Sonny Johnston

Treasurer - Jerry Harper

Secretary - Nadia Hasouris

Board Members – Kannan Venkataraman, Bob Fons, Jodie Lowry, Bill Carpenter, Nihal Wijeyesekera

## **Privacy & Disclosure Information**

The following information is available online at www.secu.slb.com (Ask A Question: Privacy Policy)

1. <u>Privacy policy (with Opt-Out form)</u> See Privacy, Documents, & Legal: Privacy Policy

2. <u>Documents available to members</u> See Privacy, Documents, & Legal: Documents Available to Members (upon request)

3. <u>Process of filing complaints</u> See Privacy, Documents, & Legal: Filing a Complaint



# SECU Statement of Condition

(as of November 2022) \$ in Millions

- Assets \$915
- Savings \$730
- Loans \$186
- Members 28,000

Locate the first four sequential numbers of your birth date **(MMDD)** in this newsletter and win \$25 (cannot be part of a string of numbers). Only primary members are eligible, using the current issue.



### Schlumberger Employees Credit Union

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#### Contact Us!

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